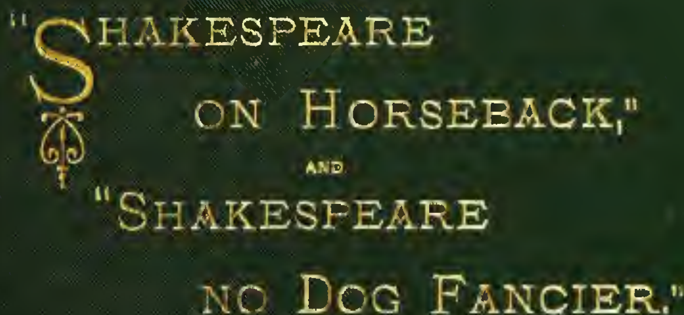
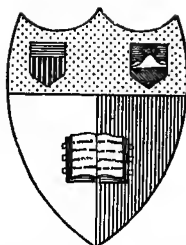
PR
3044
F64

www.libtool.com.cn



C. E. FLOWER.

www.libtool.com.cn

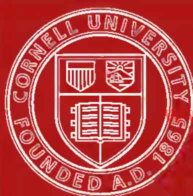


Cornell University Library
Ithaca, New York

FROM THE
BENNO LOEWY LIBRARY

COLLECTED BY
BENNO LOEWY
1854-1919

BEQUEATHED TO CORNELL UNIVERSITY



Cornell University Library

www.libtool.com.cn

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924013163708

www.libtool.com.cn

"Shakespeare on Horseback"

AND

"Shakespeare no Dog Fancier."

www.libtool.com.cn

Flower, Charles Edward.

PAPERS

READ BEFORE THE

Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare Club

MARCH 3RD, 1887, AND JANUARY 11TH, 1892.

Published for the Shakespeare Memorial at the Library.

PRICE 1s.

L
CB

www.libtool.com.cn

A. 61780

www.libtool.com.cn

INTRODUCTION.

The two following Papers are offered as slight contributions to a section of Shakespearean Literature which is constantly increasing, and in which the personal characteristics of the Poet are sought in his Poems and Plays.

They deal with certain strongly-marked likes and dislikes which crop up with curious and suggestive frequency all through his works, and have no more ambitious purpose than that of showing their bearings, and where they may be found. Thus, as in the tragedy of "Hamlet," Polonius says :—

> "Thus do we, of wisdom and of reach.
> With windlaces, and with assays of bias,
> By indirections find deductions out."

The Society before which the Papers were read and discussed began its career early in the present century, and has from time to time played a leading part in the various festivals, feasts, and commemorative gatherings which have affectionately honoured the memory of Shakespeare in his native town.

Charles E Flower

www.libtool.com.cn

SHAKESPEARE ON HORSEBACK.

www.libtool.com.cn

IN the Autumn of 1882 I undertook to read a paper to the Stratford-on-Avon Shakespeare Club, and in fulfilment of my somewhat rash promise, I jotted down some notes on a subject, one of several which had occurred to me while engaged in the labour of love which I have undertaken, "The Memorial Theatre Edition of Shakespeare's Plays."

The subject I selected was Shakespeare's knowledge of horses and everything appertaining to them, and I put my Notes into the form of a good-natured skit upon a certain class of enthusiastic Shakespearean commentators, who take up a hobby, and ride it so hard that they can see nothing but the goal they are making for, and who are apt entirely to ignore any obstacles or difficulties which present themselves in the way.

The Notes I then read appeared in the columns of the "*Herald*," and I was asked by several friends to reprint them in a more extended form. For this object I have from time to time made further memoranda, but I find that they only serve to enable me to add a few more illustrations to those which I had offered before, and while introducing some of them, I have not attempted to make this paper anything different from what it was at first, and it must, therefore, not be imagined that I for one moment intend it as a serious contribution to the study of the great Master's works.

Many essays have been written to prove all sorts of things about Shakespeare's early life, and especially to urge that he

must have studied for, or even served an apprenticeship to, various different professions and trades. And it is remarkable as showing how exact he was, and how truthful in his descriptions, that those who, by their special knowledge and experience, are most able to detect errors, have claimed the very fact of his correctness in the small details with which they were intimately familiar to prove that he also had that special knowledge of the subjects which bore out their views. Thus an eminent lawyer writes an essay to prove that Shakespeare must have studied law with a view to practising in the profession, for no person who had not so studied could possibly have been so conversant with its technicalities and phrases. Others have tried to prove that he must have studied medicine, and that he even practised as a physician. The traveller writes to show that he must have sojourned, or at least have travelled, in Italy, in Scotland, and elsewhere, as no one could possibly have learned from books the descriptions of scenery and the innumerable light touches and passing allusions which showed his familiarity with those places, and the manners and customs of their inhabitants.

www.libtool.com.cn

Shakespeare has been 'proved' to have been a schoolmaster, a butcher, a farmer, a gardener, a soldier—so many different trades, in fact, that they disprove each other; and serve to teach us that his wonderful accuracy in detailed description was derived *not* from that close study which in so many various subjects would have demanded a dozen lifetimes, but rather from a wonderful power of seeing at a glance, and of storing all he saw in a well-ordered brain, ready instantly to be produced at the bidding of a fertile imagination, to embellish and illustrate whatever subject his active mind was engaged upon at the moment. As Cowden Clarke says:

"To a mind like Shakespeare's the acquisition of knowledge of all sorts was like inhaling the air he breathed, a sheer vital necessity; he could no more help the one than the other, and both he turned to best account."

There is another class of commentators who put forth the bold theory that Shakespeare had nothing to do with his plays; but they have not only to avoid or leap over difficulties, but to swallow hard facts, and to invent other facts to stand in their place. They have to assume, among other things, that Shakespeare was a poor uneducated village lad when he went to London, and that he might there have acquired just sufficient learning to have enabled him to become the editor of others' writings, and that the riches he acquired were the product of some heavy bribes paid to induce him to become sponsor for the plays, which created so much delight as they were brought out, and that he was paid to conceal the real author or authors, and to take to himself the contemporary and lasting fame and admiration which these wonderful anonymous writers were too modest to accept. But the truth is, they have to assume that ignorance of which there is not the slightest particle of evidence. Shakespeare was certainly as far removed as it is possible to conceive from the uncouth ignorant peasant which those who advocate the Baconian and similar theories are obliged to represent him to have been. On the contrary, he doubtless inherited from his father an impulsive, generous, and energetic spirit, while from his mother (a gentlewoman, be it remembered, by birth and breeding) he derived the instincts and feelings of a true gentleman, with a taste for art and literature, which tempered the bold and manly spirit inherited from his father. Owing to his wonderfully retentive memory he would not have the slightest difficulty in mastering his lessons at the Grammar School, where, if he learned nothing else, he at least acquired a thorough knowledge of Latin and the Classics. He, of course, read every book he could lay his hands on—probably not many, but all of them worth the reading, and what he read he remembered. When he went up to London he must have had many opportunities of which he naturally would avail himself of obtaining a fair knowledge of French and Italian; and his quick power of observation enabled

www.libtool.com.cn

him to gain a familiarity with the habits, thoughts, and feelings of the city and court as thorough as that which he had previously acquired of the country and rural life.

www.libtool.com.cn

If his abundant knowledge of technicalities is to be a guide to his early training he could as easily be proved to have been a sailor, or a game-keeper, as any one of the various trades and professions allotted to him, and it is to illustrate my argument that I, taking a subject of which I know something (having had a good deal to do with horses), might now say 'Shakespeare was not a lawyer, or a doctor, or a schoolmaster; no, the internal evidence of his plays and poems proves that the greater part of his life must have been spent as a horse dealer or veterinary surgeon, otherwise he could not possibly have acquired the knowledge of horses which is exhibited through all his works.' At any rate, I can say that there is as strong internal evidence for this last suggestion as for any of the others.

I will now extract some of the more important of the very many passages which show how much Shakespeare knew about horses, how correct his judgment was on their various points and qualities; in fact, how much more he knew about a horse than any ordinary person who was not a veterinary surgeon or a jockey.

First, then, we will turn to his poem, Venus and Adonis, where we find a description of what a horse should be—

Venus and Adonis.

"Look, when a painter would surpass the life,
In limning out a well-proportion'd steed,
His art with nature's workmanship at strife,
As if the dead the living should exceed:
So did this horse excel a common one
In shape, in courage, colour, pace, and bone.

Round-hoof'd, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eye, small head, and nostril wide,
High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide:
Look, what a horse should have he did not lack,
Save a proud rider on so proud a back."

What description can be better than this? What point has he omitted or what described incorrectly, or who but a consummate judge could have so summed up the points in which a horse should www.libtool.com.cn excel, and name them all in such few terse words, giving such a picture in a dozen lines as might be expected from able writers on comparative anatomy in as many chapters?

How spirited, too, are the pictures drawn of the action of the "strong-neck'd steed," as

"Imperiously he leaps, he neighs, he bounds,
And now his woven girths he breaks asunder,
The bearing earth with his hard hoof he wounds,
Whose hollow womb resounds like heaven's thunder;
The iron bit he crunches 'tween his teeth,
Controlling what he was controlled with.

His ears up-prick'd, his braided hanging mane
Upon his compassed crest now stands on end;
His nostrils drink the air, and forth again,
As from a furnace, vapours doth he send."

Venus and Adonis.

Then we get his paces—

"Sometimes he trots, as if he told the steps,
With gentle majesty and modest pride,
Anon he rears upright, curvets and leaps,
As who would say lo! thus my strength is tried."

And further on—

"Sometime he scuds far off and there he stares,
Anon he starts at stirring of a feather;
To bid the wind a base he now prepares,
And whe'r he run or fly they know not whether:
For through his mane and tail the high wind sings,
Fanning the hairs who wave like feathered wings."

But it is not in this poem alone that a horse's action is described, as through all the plays its action and paces are constantly referred to, as in the chorus at the beginning of Henry V.:

"Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth."

Henry V. 1-Chorus.

Or, in Troilus and Cressida, where he describes the

"Strong-ribbed bark through liquid mountains cut,
Bounding between the two moist elements
Like Perseus' horse."

Troilus 1-3.

Shakespeare must have had many opportunities of riding and learning all about horses in his boyhood and youth. Doubtless, his father kept more than one, and Will was sure to get a frequent mount, besides being often sent to the neighbouring towns and villages on his father's hackney to pay or receive accounts, or carry messages connected with his business.

www.libtool.com.cn

Horseback was the only way of getting from one town to another, and heavy goods also were carried on pack horses, for there were few roads on which even a cart could travel. Those who had not horses of their own could hire them, and probably the sign that Benedick quoted

"Here is good horse to hire"

was not an unfrequent one in the streets of Stratford. If there was such a sign in Henley Street it had, in the course of two hundred years, given place to another which might have been seen about the beginning of this century over the window of a certain old house in that thoroughfare, which announced

"William Shakespeare was born in this house.
N.B.—A horse and taxed cart to let."

So in two hundred years the roads had been made passable for light carts, and the Government had found in the carts a subject for taxation, and the owner of a particular light cart had found another source of income by exhibiting his house to the travelling public, who had by that time discovered—what before had been only known to literary and poetic students—that Nature's greatest genius had been brought up in that old farm-house in Henley Street.

How pleasant it is to picture the youthful poet riding along the narrow lanes between the high and tangled hedges, or on the open tracks across the frequent downs, sometimes alone, but not lonely, for while his clear, observant eye marked every bird and flower and insect that he passed, his quick imagination peopled the country with the moving armies of York and Lan-

caster, or the sylvan followers of the Banished Duke; while Titania and her fairy train peeped out upon him from every flower and sheltering leaf. At other times, in company with one or more congenial companions, he jogged along chatting and singing as he went, and joining in a hearty laugh at some quaint conceit or merry jest.

He must have enjoyed those days when, with his merry companions, he rode up to the Cotswold Hills to join the coursing matches, where he must needs have followed on horseback Master Page's "fallow greyhound," whose owner would not confess that it

"Was outrun on Cotsall,"

Merry Wives 1-1

or he would have seen little of the hare on those open downs which are even now only partially enclosed, and where the purple heather still lingers, and the thin plantations have a hard struggle for existence against the bleak winter blasts. That he delighted in coursing as a lad we may be sure, but we know that his kindly and sympathetic heart was touched with pity for

"Poor Wat far off upon a hill,"

Venus and Adonis.

and that he cared less for coursing in after life, deeming it tame sport compared with the chase of more noble animals.

Racing for stakes as carried on in our days seems to have played a very small part in the rural life of those times, and Shakespeare makes but few references to that sport. Imogen, indeed, says:

"I have heard of riding wagers
Where horses have been nimbler than the sands
That run i' the clock's behalf."

Cymbeline 3-2.

But racing which afterwards grew to be such an important element in English social life was little thought of until betting became a science.

The speed of the horse is, of course, referred to, as is natural when it was frequently the subject of life and death

interest as it was in those days so long before railways and telegraphs. What anxiety as to whether the horse could hold out on his journey! what riding to bear the news of victory or defeat in such a time as when

www.libtool.com.cn

2 Henry IV. 1-1.

"Contention, like a horse,
Full of high feeding, madly hath broke loose,
And bears down all before him."

Those were stirring times, when, after the battle of Shrewsbury, the Earl of Northumberland's friend "out-rode" Travers, being better mounted, and brought the joyful but false news of the King's defeat.

Travers, on his slower steed, was again overtaken by a messenger of very different tidings, for

2 Henry IV. 1-1.

"After him came spurring hard
A gentleman, almost forespent with speed;
That stopped by me to breath his bloodied horse.
He asked the way to Chester, and of him
I did demand what news from Shrewsbury;
He told me that rebellion had bad luck,
And that young Harry Percy's spur was cold.
With that he gave his able horse the head,
And, bending forward, struck his armed heels
Against the panting sides of his poor jade
Up to the rowel head: and starting so
He seemed in running to devour the way,
Staying no longer question."

But the Poet used the horse's speed as an illustration of more peaceful scenes. It will suffice to take one example from the Sonnets:

Sonnet 50.

"How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek—my weary travel's end—
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,
Thus far the miles are measured from thy friend.
The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
His rider loved not speed, being made from thee:
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
Which heavily he answers with a groan,
More sharp to me than spurring to his side:
For that same groan doth put this in my mind,
My grief lies onward, and my joy behind."

"Thus can my love excuse the slow offence
Of my dull bearer, when from thee I speed;
From where thou art why should I haste me thence?
Till I return, of posting is no need:
Oh, what excuse will my poor beast then find
When swift extremity can seem but slow?
Then should I spur, though mounted on the wind,
In winged speed no motion shall I know:
Then can no horse with my desire keep pace:
Therefore desire, of perfect'st love being made
Shall neigh—no dull flesh—in his fiery race;
But love, for love, shall thus excuse my jade;
Since from the going he went wilful slow,
Toward thee I'll run, and give him leave to go."

Sonnet 51.

www.libtool.com.cn

Perhaps I may add, as illustrating this subject in a different vein, Benedick's not very polite retort to Beatrice—

"I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer."

Much Ado 1-1.

Shakespeare not only looked on a horse with the eye of a judge, but he entertained for him a feeling of affection which is exhibited through all the plays and poems. He constantly makes his characters refer in affectionate terms to their horses. I will particularly instance the Dauphin in Henry V.

"I will not change my horse with any that treads but on four pasterns. *Ca, ha!* He bounds from the earth, as if his entrails were hairs. *Le cheval volant*, the Pegasus, *qui a les narines de feu.* When I bestride him I soar, I am a hawk; he trots the air; the earth sings when he touches it: the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes.

Orl. He is of the colour of the nutmeg.

Dau. And of the heat of ginger; it is a beast for Perseus: he is pure air and fire, and the dull elements of earth and water never appear in him, but only in patient stillness while his rider mounts him. He is, indeed, a horse, and all other jades you may call beasts.

Con. Indeed, my lord, it is a most absolute and excellent horse.

Dau. It is the prince of palfreys: his neigh is like the bidding of a monarch, and his countenance enforces homage.

Orl. No more, cousin.

Dau. Nay, the man hath no wit that cannot from the rising of the lark to the lodging of the lamb vary deserved praise on my palfrey. It is a theme as fluent as the sea: turn the sands into eloquent tongues, and my horse is argument for them all. 'Tis a subject for a sovereign to reason on, and for a sovereign's sovereign to ride on; and for the world (familiar to us and unknown) to lay apart their particular functions and wonder at him. I once writ a sonnet in his praise, and began thus 'Wonder of Nature,' &c., &c."

Henry V. 3-7.

This, of course, is the ridiculous exaggeration of praise, and, as the Constable retorted, 'twere more honour some were away—

Henry V. 3-7.

"Even as your horse bears your praises; who would trot as well were some of your brags dismounted."

www.libtool.com.cn

But this is only one of numerous instances in which the horse is referred to with expressions of the greatest admiration and regard, such as

Midsummer Night's Dream 3-1.

"True as truest horse,"

and as true regard for an object is shown by the care taken for its comfort, he makes his characters give directions that their horses should be well cared for, as when Lafeu says

All's Well 4-5.

"Let my horses be well looked to, without any tricks."

He was up to ostler's tricks.

Or when the carrier in Henry IV. looks after the stuffing of the saddle, and his companion complains of the quality of the corn.

1 Henry IV. 2-1.

"I pr'y thee, Tom, beat Cuts' saddle, put a few flocks in the point: the poor jade is wrung in the withers out of all cess.

"Peas and beans are as dank here as a dog, and that is the next way to give poor jades the bots: this house is turned npside down since Robin, ostler, died."

Prince Hal considers it a characteristic of the gallant Hotspur that he should think of his horse before he can answer his wife's anxious inquiry. The Prince says—

1 Henry IV. 2-4.

"I am not yet of Percy's mind, the Hotspur of the North; he that kills me some six or seven dozen of Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife 'Fie upon this quiet life! I want work.' 'Oh my sweet Harry,' says she, 'how many hast thou killed to-day?' 'Give my roan horse a drench,' says he; and answers 'some fourteen' an hour after."

Hotspur, indeed, thought much of his horse.

1 Henry IV. 4-1.

"Come, let me take my horse,
Who is to bear me like a thunderbolt
Against the bosom of the Prince of Wales:
Harry to Harry shall, hot horse to horse,
Meet and ne'er part 'till one drop down a corse."

Shakespeare had observed and probably practised the management and breaking-in of horses. Thus he describes how horses should be broken—

> "Those that tame wild horses
> Pace them not in their hands to make them gentle,
> But stop their mouths with stubborn bits, and spur them
> Till they obey the manage."

Henry VIII. 5-2.

www.libtool.com.cn

And again he says in Venus and Adonis

> "The colt that's backed and burdened being young
> Loseth his pride, and never waxeth strong."

Venus and Adonis.

I wish that breeders of horses would remember those lines: we should not have the country so overrun with unsound horses, whose various defects are generally brought on by over-work when only two or three years old.

He sums up the description of a gallant man by comparing him to

> "An angel dropped down from the skies
> To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,
> And witch the world with noble horsemanship."

1 Henry IV. 4-1.

And again Mark Antony likens a tried and valiant soldier to his horse that

> "I teach to fight,
> To wind, to stop, to run directly on,
> His corporal motion governed by my spirit."

Julius Cæsar 4-1.

And in Hamlet the King, saying that the French

> "Can well on horseback,"

goes on to describe one of them, Lamond, a gentleman of Normandy,

> "He grew unto his seat,
> And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,
> As he had been incorpsed and demi-natured
> With the brave beast."

Hamlet 4-7.

He knew well there must be for perfect training an intimate sympathy between the horse and his rider, so that the one can instantly feel the intention of the other, even before it can be expressed by word or sign. He says—

> "Well could he ride, and often men would say,
> 'That horse his mettle from his rider takes;

Lovers' Complaint.

Proud of subjection, noble by the sway,
What rounds, what bounds, what course, what stops he makes;'
And controversy hence a question takes,
Whether the horse by him became his deed,
Or he his manage by the well-doing steed."

www.libtool.com.cn

In Measure for Measure he describes severe laws as

Measure 1-3.

"The needful bits and curbs to headstrong steeds."

And in the same play Claudio refers to the public body as

Measure 1-2.

"A horse whereon the governor doth ride,
Who newly in the seat, that it may know
He can command, lets it straight feel the spur."

Many more passages might be quoted to show the high esteem in which Shakespeare held good horsemanship. He sometimes, however, refers to bad riders, as when Celia likens Orlando to

As You Like It 3-4.

"A puny tilter that spurs his horse but on one side."

Shakespeare certainly knew more about the horse than many of his commentators, for in Lear, when the Fool says

Lear 3-6.

"He's mad that trusts in a horse's *health*,"

an eminent editor, in a note, remarks, "we should read heels, as health has no meaning," and this so-called emendation has actually been adopted by several of the learned closet critics; whereas health has the best of meanings to one who knows anything about horses. The fool, of course, used health in the sense that we say soundness, and all those that have had much to do with horses will bear feeling testimony to the truth and wisdom of his remark. In the same play there is an amusing instance of correctness of observation in little things—

Lear 2-4.

"Horses are tied by the head; dogs and bears by the neck: monkeys by the loins, and men by the legs."

Kent being in the stocks—and this leads us to the complete knowledge which Shakespeare evinces of all the various parts of the horse's harness and trappings. In Henry IV. the carrier looks after the stuffing of the saddle. The trappings of silver and gold are referred to. Bridles and headstalls, spurs and

rowels, bits and reins, of course, are often mentioned, but not bearing reins, which he doubtless would have condemned in strong language had he witnessed the modern use of those instruments of torture.

www.libtool.com.cn

Although he mentions various coloured horses, Shakespeare seems to have had a decided liking for roan, as, for instance, King Richard's roan Barbary, of which the faithful groom said—

> "Oh, how it yearned my heart, when I beheld
> In London streets, that coronation day,
> When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary!
> That horse that thou so often hath bestrid;
> That horse that I so carefully have dressed.
> *King*. Rode he on Barbary? Tell me, gentle friend,
> How went he under him?
> *Groom*. So proud as if he had disdained the ground.
> *King*. So proud that Bolingbroke was on his back?
> That jade hath eat bread from my royal hand;
> This hand hath made him proud with clapping him.
> Would he not stumble? Would he not fall down,
> (Since pride must have a fall) and break the neck
> Of that proud man that did usurp his back?
> Forgiveness, horse! why do I rail on thee,
> Since thou, created to be awed by man,
> Was born to bear? I was not made a horse,
> And yet I bear a burden like an ass,
> Spur-gall'd and tired by jauncing Bolingbroke."

Richard II. 5-5.

Again, when Hotspur's servant tells him that Butler has brought one horse only from the sheriff, Hotspur inquires

> "What horse? a roan? a crop-eared, is it not?"

Henry IV. 2-3.

And adds

> "That roan shall be my throne."

And afterwards Prince Hal speaks of "Hotspur's roan horse."

The Dauphin's favourite horse was "of the colour of the nutmeg," which we now call chestnut. And we hear in King Lear of a

> "Bay trotting horse."

Lear 3-4.

Lafeu's horse also was a bay—

> "I'd give bay Curtal and his furniture."

All's Well 2-3.

White horses are referred to several times, but I believe that black horses are only mentioned once, when Titus Andronicus tells Tamora to

Titus Andronicus 5-2.

> "Provide two proper palfries, black as jet,
> To hale thy vengeful wagon swift away."

www.libtool.com.cn

Shakespeare knew that the value of a horse was reduced by a white blaze or cloud upon his face—

Ant. & Cleo. 3-2.

> "He has a cloud on his face;
> He were the worse for that were he a horse."

Of course, we frequently find reference to the value of a horse as a gift, worthy of a prince to bestow or to receive, as in Coriolanus, where the Roman general Cominius, when adding the name of Coriolanus to that of Caius Marcius, and after offering a tenth of all the horses taken in the field, bestows

Coriolanus 1-9.

> "My noble steed known to the camp
> With all his trim belonging."

The Lord Lucius presents Timon with

Timon of Athens 1-2.

> "Four milk white horses, trapped in silver."

But that was only in the certainty of a greater gift being returned, for, as the Senator said,

Timon of Athens 2-1.

> "If I would sell my horse and buy twenty more
> Better than he, why give my horse to Timon?
> Ask nothing, give it him, it foals me straight
> A stable o' horses."

The King in Hamlet wages

Hamlet 5-2.

> "Six Barbary horses,"

And in Troilus and Cressida, Diomedes bids his servant

Troilus 5-5.

> "Take thou Troilus' horse
> Present the fair steed to my lady Cressid."

Sir Andrew Aguecheek offers his horse to make up the quarrel with his supposed ferocious opponent,

Twelfth Night 3-4.

> "I'll give him my horse grey Capilet."

And Sir Toby takes care to get the advantage to himself.

> "Marry, I'll ride your horse as I ride you;
> I have his horse"—he says to Fabian—"to take up the quarrel."

My opening quotation was an admirable description of what a horse should be. Shakespeare was equally felicitous in describing what he should not be. He concentrated every kind of unsoundness into a horse when Biondello says that Petruchio is coming—

www.libtool.com.cn

"His horse hipped with an old mothy saddle and stirrups of no kindred: besides, possessed with the glanders, and like to mose in the chine: troubled with the lampass, infected with the fashions, full of wind-galls, sped with spavins, rayed with the yellows, past cure of the fives, stark spoiled with the staggers, begnawn with bots: swayed in the back, and shoulder shotten: ne'er legged before, and with a half cheeked bit, and a headstall of sheep's leather, which being restrained to keep him from stumbling hath been often burst, and now repaired with knots: one girth six times pieced, and a woman's crupper of velure, which hath two letters for her name fairly set down with studs, and here and there pieced with pack thread."

Taming of the Shrew 3-2.

Can you suggest any addition to that? Cannot you see the poor wretch in his trappings, which Petruchio must have rescued from the knacker's yard to carry him to his bride? In another scene in the same play he uses as a climax

"As many diseases as two and fifty horses."

And yet there are clever commentators who think that when he speaks of a horse's health he must mean something else. I fancy that Shakespeare must have had some troubles in horse dealing just before he wrote The Taming of the Shrew—it has so many allusions to mishaps connected with them. He often refers to horse stealing, a crime more common then, when the country was thinly populated, and when there were no rural police or pursuing telegraphs. When Lord Bardolph (not Falstaff's friend), wishing to discredit the messenger of bad news, he at once says—

"Who, he? he was some hilding fellow
That had stolen the horse he rode on."

2 Henry IV. 1-1.

And the better known Bardolph in The Merry Wives of Windsor was the victim of the treachery of three Germans, who, after staying a week with mine host of the Garter, hired

his horses—Bardolph in charge riding behind one—when as soon as they came beyond Eton

Merry Wives 4-5.

"They threw me off into a slough of mire, and set spurs, and away like three German devils, three Doctor Faustuses."

These Germans, it seems, had cheated all the landlords of Reading, Maidenhead, and Colebrook of their horses and money. They probably sold them in Smithfield, where Bardolph had before that time bought a horse for Falstaff.

2 Henry IV. 1-2.

The fat knight was very dependent upon his horses for locomotion. They were about the last things he could part with; and for this reason the Merry Wives, in order to be revenged on him, determined to

Merry Wives 2-1.

"Lead him on with a fine baited delay, till he hath pawn'd his horses to mine host of the Garter."

They succeeded in their plan, as we learn from the last scene of the play.

Among the descriptions of horses we may quote the passages in Henry V., where the boasting French exclaim

Henry V. 4-2.

"Hark how our steeds for present service neigh,
Mount them and make incision in their hides,
That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,
And dout them with superfluous courage."

And afterwards, describing the supposed state of the English army, Grandpre says

Henry V. 4-2.

"Their horsemen sit like fixed candlesticks,
With torch-staves in their hands; and their poor jades
Lob down their heads, dropping the hides and hips:
The gum down-roping from their pale dead eyes,
And in their pale dull mouths the gimmal bit
Lies foul with chew'd grass, still and motionless;
And their executors, the knavish crows,
Fly o'er them all, impatient for their hour."

In Henry IV., Vernon, while counselling prudence to Hotspur, and urging him to put off the fight until the morrow, says

1 Henry IV. 4-3.

"Your uncle Worcester's horse came but to-day,
And now their pride and mettle is asleep;
Their courage with hard labour tame and dull,
That not a horse is half the half himself."

Hotspur replies—

> "So are the horses of the enemy
> In general journey—bated and brought low;
> The better part of ours are full of rest."

Had Vernon's advice been taken in this and other matters it had been the better for Hotspur.

www.libtool.com.cn

Shakespeare has referred to the courage of the horse, especially on the battle field, but he does not forget his timidity at any unexpected object:

> "Anon he starts at stirring of a feather."

Venus and Adonis

And it appears that he knew that the fear of a wild beast would make him fly in terror:

> "Sheep run not half so timorous from the wolf
> Or horse or oxen from the leopard."

1 Henry VI. 1-5.

African travellers recount among the most ordinary incidents the danger of losing their horses and oxen from their breaking away in fright at the sound of a wild beast's roar.

Horses played a part in the superstitions of the times, such as are recorded in Richard III.

> "Three rimes to-day my footcloth horse did stumble,
> And startled when he looked upon the tower."

Richard III. 3-4.

And they are often brought in to homely proverbs, as in the same play,

> "But yet I run before my horse to market.
> Clarence still lives."

Richard III. 1-1.

Or, in Henry VI.,

> "Unless the adage must be verified
> That beggars mounted run their horse to death."

3 Henry VI. 1-4.

A proverb, I presume, which preceded that of 'put a beggar on horseback, and he'll ride to the devil."

I am drawing to a close now, not, however, from want of more matter; but before I conclude I must refer to the use Shakespeare makes of the horse in drawing similes. I will

only cite two or three out of many I might take which show how ready he was to use that noble animal as an illustration, as where Buckingham speaks of the ungoverned state of the country:

Richard III. 2-3.

> "Where every horse bears his commanding rein,
> And may direct his course as please himself."

www.libtool.com.cn

Or, as Norfolk says—

Henry VIII. 1-1.

> "To climb steep hills
> Requires slow pace at first; anger is like
> A full hot horse, who, being allowed his way,
> Self mettle tires him."

And again in the same play, where Lord Sands, describing the tricks the English have learned in France, says—

Henry VIII. 1-3.

> "They have all new legs and lame ones; one would take it
> That never saw their pace before, the spavin
> Or spring-halt reigned among them."

And we must not omit from the Merchant of Venice

Merchant of Venice 2-6.

> "Where is the horse that doth untread again
> His tedious measures with the unbated fire
> That he did pace them first."

Or, a fine example from Julius Cæsar,

Julius Cæsar 4-2.

> "There are no tricks in plain and simple faith,
> But hollow men, like horses hot in hand,
> Make gallant show and promise of their mettle,
> But when they should endure the bloody spurs
> They fall their crests, and, like deceitful jades,
> Sink in the trial."

I think that I have now given enough illustrations to prove my case. I might go on till you would exclaim with Portia

Merchant of Venice 1-2.

> "He doth nothing but talk of his horse."

But I have really only taken some of the most striking out of hundreds, and I think that I have shown that if Shakespeare's knowledge of law or medicine was so great as to prove he must have been a lawyer or a doctor, the knowledge he had of horses, their good and bad points and characteristics, was quite sufficient to have qualified him for a certificate from the

College of Veterinary Surgeons. But the fact is, it would be as difficult for

"Thy horse to con an oration,"

Troilus 2-1.

as for us to find any subject with which the great master mind was not familiar, and with the familiarity of one completely initiated rather than of an amateur. And as it was impossible that the whole of his younger life could have been devoted to *all* of the professions and trades to which it has been claimed that he has served an apprenticeship, may we not rather conclude that his works are the outcome of a mind ever observant and enquiring—never forgetting or despising even "unconsidered trifles"—and capable of retaining, digesting, arranging, and reproducing every incident presented to his senses?

I would, in conclusion, hope that this paper, though by no means exhaustive of its subject, may serve to show how much there is in Shakespeare's writings to assist and lead one on in other studies. You have had one instance in the admirable paper read by Mr. Humphreys on the Flora of Shakespeare. Doubtless he would bear witness that the study of botany and the collection of specimens were made pleasanter and even easier by the poetic associations connected with their names and habits.

I can say the same, and so will any of you who may be inclined to work out what Shakespeare has written upon any subject, no matter what, in which you may take a special interest.

Now I conclude with the hope that you will not vote me

"As tedious as a tired horse."

1 Henry IV. 3-1.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

"The more I see of Men the better I like dogs."
Madame de Staël

www.libtool.com.cn

SHAKESPEARE NO DOG FANCIER.

SOME years since I read a paper before this Club entitled "Shakespeare on Horseback," the subject being the poet's knowledge of, and love for, horses. I was then urged by a few friends to treat of his knowledge of dogs in the same way, but I was a busy man then, and had not time enough for the labour of examining, collating, and weighing the bearing of the three or four hundred passages which had to be considered before putting together even so humble a contribution to Shakespearean literature as this is. Therefore, the idea was for a time abandoned. Having now much enforced leisure (although the task has become far more difficult, and, indeed, cannot be prosecuted without the assistance of others), I return to the subject, and will endeavour to show what Shakespeare has said about dogs. In the first place, I find that the direct references to dogs are about three hundred, almost as many as those to horses. But on examining the more important ones there is a wide, strongly-marked difference in the character of the collected quotations relating to dogs as compared with those concerning horses. Throughout his plays and poems Shakespeare not only expresses his admiration for the noble qualities, the beauty and usefulness of the horse, but he constantly betrays his personal affection for him as a living sentient being, whom he can love as a dear friend, and for whom he feels the deepest sympathy. Moreover, he applies

the horse and its qualities to illustrate certain attributes which he finds in man, and these are nearly always qualities of a character indicating courage and nobility, as pointed out in my former essay. It is remarkable that very few traces of this feeling are expressed in his allusions to the dog, an animal now considered to be especially the friend of man, and one with which other poets are accustomed to identify feelings of friendship and sympathy much more closely than with any other animal. The dog, in preference to the horse, is now used by our more modern poets to illustrate the truest type of affection and fidelity; his faithfulness is depicted as something almost superhuman, his love for his master, his willing obedience, and his steadfast, unselfish attachment (even under constant ill-treatment) are held up as examples for imitation. Cowper, Shelley, Scott, Burns, Wordsworth, Byron, and others have all their good words for the dog.

www.libtool.com.cn

But though Shaksepeare does not entirely ignore any allusion to a feeling of sympathy between man and dog, he treats that feeling very lightly, and evidently regarded dogs more with respect to their uses and for the services they render men in carrying on their sports or their business. There are two, but only two, passages with any important bearing favourable to the dog in his works. One will be found in "Timon of Athens," where the cynical philosopher and the man-hating Timon meet in the wood, and the other, in the same act and scene, where Timon, touched by the unchanged friendship of Alcibiades, says:—

Timon of Athens 4-3.

"I do wish thou wert a dog
That I might love thee something."

In the first we have the following lines:—

"*Apemantus.* What man didst thou ever know unthrift that was beloved after his means;

Timon. Who, without these means thou talkest of, didst thou ever know beloved?

Apemantus. Myself.

Timon. I understand thee—thou hadst some means to keep a dog."

Yet that Timon neither loved nor admired dogs is made quite apparent in other passages, and we are, therefore, compelled to conclude that he made use of the comparison rather to disparage the man than praise the dog. The conclusion that Shakespeare did not love dogs was forced upon me most unexpectedly as the result of my researches, and I have consequently been obliged to change the original title of my paper for that which now stands at its head—Shakespeare no Dog Fancier. A third passage bearing upon this subject is from the Induction to the "Taming of the Shrew," and this also might at first sight be quoted against me, but on examination, and taken in conjunction with other passages, it quite bears out my contention that Shakespeare's regard for dogs was rather for their uses than for the animals themselves. This passage is that where a Lord enters with his huntsman and servants, saying:—

www.libtool.com.cn

> "Huntsman, I charge thee, tender well my hounds;
> Brach Merriman, the poor cur, is emboss'd,
> And couple Clowder with the deep-mouth'd brach.
> Saw'st thou not, boy, how Silver made it good
> At the hedge corner, in the coldest fault?
> I would not lose the dog for twenty pound.
> 1 *Hun.* Why, Belman is as good as he, my lord;
> He cried upon it at the merest loss,
> And twice to-day pick'd out the dullest scent:
> Trust me, I take him for the better dog.
> *Lord.* Thou art a fool; if Echo were as fleet
> I would esteem him worth a dozen such.
> But sup them well, and look unto them all;
> To-morrow I intend to hunt again.

Taming of the Shrew, Induction s. 1.

Here the lord (evidently a kindly and considerate man, who takes good care of his hounds, and has been pleased by the sport they have shown him), displays nothing whatever of any sentiment of love and regard for the animals apart from the sport and pleasure they have given, and would again give on the morrow if properly attended to. This is the case with less important passages which I shall point out later on, showing that for one expression of tender feeling, or even the barest liking, there are dozens where positive dislike or contempt are

plainly expressed. Let us now try to discover a reason, or reasons, for Shakespeare's evident preference for the horse to the dog. Is it that the horse was his more frequent companion? As the wool-stapler's son travelling the country round about Stratford on his father's business, his sympathetic spirit and innate love for animals made for him a favourite and a friend of the horse which carried him, and which he, doubtless, fed and groomed with his own hands; while he probably did not possess a dog. For dogs were at that time expensive articles of luxury,* only considered to appertain to the rich and their retainers, to serve in their sports, or as watch dogs, or to help in the duties of the shepherds and swineherds. Moreover, it is probable that if the youth kept a dog it might bring him into disfavour with the well-to-do and sober-minded, and by making him an object of suspicion would be likely to lead him into scrapes and difficulties. It is hardly probable that he could, as a young man, afford to keep a couple of grey-hounds to enter into the coursing matches on the Cotswold Hills, although he might readily have attended them as a spectator, when, as we know, his sympathies leant more to the hare than the hounds. Whether or no there were any general or local enactments that prohibited the youth from keeping a dog, it is certain that the gentry of the neighbourhood would look askance upon the young man travelling about the country ostensibly for the purpose of purchasing wool and skins from the small farmers and cottagers, under cloak of which business the dog following at his heels might easily pick up many a hare or cony. His father, too, would naturally discourage or positively forbid his keeping a dog of any kind, not only on account of the objections that might be raised, but from its being a worse than useless addition to the expenses of the family, as in the time of William's boyhood we learn that the Shakespeares were in considerable straits for money. There are other probabilities which we may venture to consider as

* See quotation on previous page.

www.libtool.com.cn

reasons why dogs were not the companions and friends of the lad. It is possible that his mother, a lady with refined and cultivated tastes, who had married rather below her former station in life, while bringing up a numerous family in the Henley-street house, was not able to spend much on the luxuries or even comforts of life, and, with habits and tastes that caused her to inculcate order and cleanliness in her household, must have objected to the intrusion of dogs and puppies as the friends and companions of the active children, who carried mud enough on to the stone floors as they rushed in and out of the house (not from the well-paved streets of our days, but from the dirty yards and muddy lanes of former times) to have been a sore trial to the lady mother, without the additional confusion and disorder that would be occasioned by doggish play-fellows. And as he drove out the intruder he would naturally have used the language of abuse learned from his elders, and which he so frequently applied in after-life to the objectionable and "base intruder!"

> "Go, base intruder, overweening slave!"

Two Gentlemen of Verona 3-1.

And it is but natural to suppose that William, with his keen observant eye, and its power quickened by his ardent love for his gentle mother "as much as child ever loved" must have tried to assist and relieve her by driving away, instead of encouraging anything that would give her annoyance or trouble. We may be pretty sure that the little lad would early have turned his childish steps to the stable, first holding his father's hand, and there, even before he could be called a boy, helping to feed and saddle the sturdy nag, or proud to bring him to the farm-house door, and hold him until his father was ready to mount and ride off on business or pleasure. He would thus naturally have his childish instinct of love for animals turned towards the horse that was prized by his parents rather than to the dog that was looked upon as an objectionable and "unmannerly intruder." With the dog it was:—

Lear 1-1.

www.libtool.com.cn

Timon of Athens 5-1.

"Out rascal dogs."

Titus Andronicus 5-3.

"Away inhuman dog, unhallowed."

Midsummer Night's Dream 3-2.

"Out dog! out cur! thou driv'st me past the bounds of maiden's patience."

www.libtool.com.cn

While with the horse it was ever:—

Coriolanus 1-9.

"A noble steed."

Titus Andronicus 2-3.

"A goodly steed."

Troilus 3-3.

"A gallant horse fallen in first rank."

And so on. The dog, wherever he is named, was usually "cut-throat dog," "blasphemous, uncharitable dog," "damned inexorable dog," or "inhuman dog" (Merchant of Venice, i., 3., and iv., 1.), and so on, over and over again to the end of the chapter. He says of one that he was "fit only to be beat like a dog" (Othello, v., 1.), and of another he should be sent to "the fellow that whips the dogs" (Two Gentlemen, iv., 1).

This idea of the early influences ou the child's life may be scouted as merely visionary. It is, however, not only a pleasant fancy, but has at any rate more foundation from what we know of the poet's writings, and what few facts have come down to us of his actual life and surroundings, than have the groundless slanders invented by the Donnelli-Pottian calumniators. "I thank thee, dog, for teaching me that word."

Happily it was no English idea to put forth the sheer invention that Mary Arden, the daughter of a house long established, known, and respected throughout Warwickshire, was the mother of a man whom they describe as so debased and ignorant as to be unfit for any respectable companionship, but of whom fifty contemporary writers spoke in terms of praise, admiration, and envy; who, after a distinguished career in London, returned with renown and wealth to his native town, welcomed with respect and affection by his neighbours. If he

had gained his wealth by being a party to the fraudulent imposition now said to have been palmed off before the open eyes of his contemporaries by Lord Bacon, he would surely have gone anywhere else to live on his ill-gotten gains rather than have returned to Stratford, where his antecedents were so well known. Can we conceive that his fortune (so very large for those days) was the result of liberal payments from "the greatest, wisest, *meanest* of mankind" for partnership in a conspiracy as absurd as fraudulent, and that either Bacon or Shakespeare could have palmed off the writings of the one for those of the other? And that not only printers, publishers, and a host of business men, but half of the poet's contemporary literary friends and enemies should have joined in a plot to deceive the world for three hundred years, only to be revealed at last by a few astute Americans! We know the honours he received at the close of his life when he was buried in the chancel of the Parish Church, and that over his grave was placed the inscription:—

"In judgment a Nestor, in intellect a Socrates, in Art a Virgil. The earth covets, the people mourn, Olympus has him."

Such a description, put up by contemporaries and friends, must surely have called down torrents of contempt and ridicule from many wits, who, from envy, would have been quite as ready and far more capable of vilifying the dead poet as Donnelly and his scurrilous followers, if they had but one peg of fact on which to hang their wretched lampoons. When these epithets were placed over Shakespeare's grave time was too fresh to permit of such monstrous inventions to be circulated as were put forth by Donnelly under the protecting shade of nearly three hundred years.

"O, let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was;
For beauty, wit,
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating time."

Troilus and Cressida 3-3.

The child, then, grown past boyhood to youth, with his natural instincts of affection turned towards the horse rather than to the dog, would assuredly take every opportunity of riding up to the Cotswold Hills and joining in the racing, coursing, and other sports as a humble follower and eager spectator of the games in which he, at that time, could not share as an equal. Then his power of reasoning and observation daily grew in strength, and as his poetic genius gradually developed he would learn to mark and apply the various incidents that arose before him, and draw comparisons, and store up descriptions, of which he soon after made such splendid use. We know only the more matured works that fell from his pen—works which he considered worthy of presenting in their full completion to his Queen, his learned and witty comrades, and the accomplished critics of London. But, ah! to think of the unconsidered trifles, the dramatic scenes and scraps of verse that must have fallen from him in his younger days, the recitals that made his mother smile and sigh, or his father roar; the little crude dramas acted with and for his school-mates after each visit to the town of strolling players had turned their thoughts for the time to theatres, or rather to acting without a theatre. What a light would be cast on the character and surroundings of the boy if only one of his fugitive, scratchy, youthful jottings had been saved!

When one thinks of what patient care has been bestowed on every line and word of all his plays and poems, how every fact and hint has been seized upon and weighed by conscientious students, anxious to point out any faint spark that can throw light upon the outer life and inner history of the poet, how sad it is to think that nothing was kept or saved from all of that he would have considered too poor or trifling to be preserved. But we must not leave young Shakespeare (young master William Shakespeare) too long at the coursing match beyond Dover's Hill, or he may get into bad company. At present he is in safe

www.libtool.com.cn

hands, for he has found in the crowd a certain elderly person whom he greets somewhat irreverently as "Puff." He is no less a person than his father's friend, Goodman Pufford, of Barcheston, with whom he stands, just in the rear of "the quality," the squires and sporting yeomen of Warwickshire, Worcestershire. and Gloucestershire, and quite near enough to overhear their loud, boisterous conversation, and hearing probably a good deal that we should consider the reverse of edifying. But all that slips over his innocent mind without leaving a stain, his attention being rivetted upon all that belongs to the sport in progress. He sees there the 'squire of Charlecote (the original of his Robert Shallow, Esq., of the county of Gloucester, Justice of Peace, and Custos Rotulorum), with his foolish cousin, Master Slender, and they are soon joined by roystering William Squale, a Cotswold man, the companion of their student's life in Clements Inn. In the train of Sir Thomas Lucy we also see William Cook, the caterer, and his fellow-servant, Thomas Davy, bailiff to the 'squire, and, at the same time, strange as it may now seem, Vicar of Charlecote. With them is a great crony of young Shakespeare's, little Lawrence Smythe, a lad of about his own age, who helped in the kitchen and about the yard at Charlecote House, and grew up to succeed Cook in his office of caterer. Poor fellow! Years after, when he was about some business appertaining to his office at Worcester (possibly to arrange about a supply of lampreys for the great feast which was to be given in honour of Queen Elizabeth's visit), he contracted the plague, of which he died. Here, however, he is, lively and well enough, standing in the group about Davy, the Charlecote Vicar, and his friend the Welsh parson, and the two have plenty of talk together, not only about theology and the sports going on before them, but also of the respective merits of red and white wheat, the rearing of pigeons, and the news from Hinckley fair. The general talk is, however, of various kinds of hunting, from the wolf and boar down to the smallest

Henry IV. 2nd p. 5-3.

www.libtool.com.cn

game, and Will learns enough to be useful to him in times to come when he will be writing that appeal from Venus to Adonis to leave the "angry, chasing, sharp-fanged boar," and ruled by her—

www.libtool.com.cn

> "Uncouple at the timorous flying hare,
> Or at the fox, which lives by subtlety,
> Or at the roe, which no encounter dares.
> Pursue these fearful creatures o'er the downs,
> And on thy well-breathed horse keep with thy hounds."

Our fancy sees the lad, Shakespeare, with his Stratford companions following the train of the Squire of Charlecote as far as their roads lay together, until Sir Thomas, pleased with his eagerness and intelligence, tells him that he may join in their falcon-flying matches if he will make himself useful in beating up the quarry, and will even allow him to follow the hunting at Fulbrook Park, where the hare instead of being pursued in full view by greyhounds would be more slowly but as surely hunted down by scent among the small enclosures and the scattered woods, when the hounds, (mostly mongrel bloodhounds, slow in pace, with a great cry,) will be the carefully selected and bred progenitors of the foxhounds and harriers of our later day. They were dogs which had seemingly been originally brought from the south of Europe, and to have occasioned Shakespeare's description of the Spartan boar-hound whose—

> "Heads are hung
> With ears that sweep away the morning dew."

Midsummer Night's Dream 4-1.

Thus Shakespeare had an opportunity of seeing the incidents which he has so fully and perfectly described in "Venus and Adonis"—

> "And when thou hast on foot the purblind hare,
> Mark the poor wretch, to overshut his troubles
> How he out-runs the wind, and with what care
> He cranks and crosses, with a thousand doubles:
> The many musits through the which he goes
> Are like a labyrinth to amaze his foes.

Sometime he runs among a flock of sheep,
To make the cunning hounds mistake their smell,
And sometime where earth-delving conies keep,
To stop the loud pursuers in their yell,
And sometime sorteth with a herd of deer:
Danger deviseth shifts; wit waits on fear:

www.libtool.com.cn

For there his smell with others being mingled,
The hot scent-snuffing hounds are driven to doubt,
Ceasing their clamorous cry till they have singled
With much ado the cold fault cleanly out;
Then do they spend their mouths: Echo replies,
As if another chase were in the skies.

By this, poor Wat, far off upon a hill,
Stands on his hinder legs with listening ear,
To hearken if his foes pursue him still:
Anon their loud alarums he doth hear;
And now his grief may be compared well
To one sore sick that hears the passing-bell.

Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch
Turn, and return, indenting with the way;
Each envious briar his weary legs doth scratch,
Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay;
For misery is trodden on by many,
And being low never relieved by any."

How complete, poetical, and perfect is the whole of this description.

The road the party took from the Cotswolds to Stratford and on to Charlecote is now a hard, well macadamised one between high hedges, but in the days of which I am speaking, and almost down to the beginning of the present century, it ran across a series of open commons. About five miles from Stratford we can well imagine Sir Thomas stayed at Wincote to meet his friend Loggin who was staying at the Manor House (a fine building, with a large hall which has only recently been demolished, although some remains of it have been converted into a farmhouse), which still stands in the orchard where grew until quite recently three mulberry trees of goodly size and venerable appearance, traditionally connected with the name of Shakespeare, and were, probably,

planted by him at a time when this tree was introduced into so many Stratford orchards.

While Sir Thomas goes up to the Hall, Shakespeare and his humbler companions stop a few minutes at Mrs. Hackett's tavern (which stood about two hundred yards from the Squire's mansion) to taste the hostess's ale and exchange a passing jest with the well-known Miller of Quinton, who was there waiting with Gregory Sly of Clifford to hear the results of the games.

www.libtool.com.cn

This Wincote (as Shakespeare wrote it), not Wilmcote (to which it has been changed by some modern editors) was doubtless the scene of the Induction to the "Tamiug of the Shrew" before cited; and probably the Poet had himself been present when some similar practical joke was played, after, perhaps, he had followed the chase where Merryman was hurt and Silver behaved so well. He witnessed, or perhaps performed in a play in the great hall there, which I cannot help identifying as that in which the first rough version of the "Taming of the Shrew" saw light.

Thus William Shakespeare grew up, helpiug his father at his business, and sometimes going to school, where his quickness in study gave him plenty of time to caricature his pompous but learned pedagogue, whom he introduced undes the name of Holofernes into "Love's Labour's Lost," and drew him, probably, from the well-known schoolmaster, Holofernes Taylor, who was buried at Winchcomb. Will was so apt a scholar that he was soon permitted to take the place of monitor or assistant master. This was done for the mutual advantage of himself and the master; for while he was saved from paying any salary, young Shakespeare had the run of all his books, of which the pedagogue doubtless had a good store, for he was a learned man, as it was fit the master of a school should be who had a salary which was twice as large as that which the head-master of Eton received.

We know that companies of players occasionally visited Stratford and acted in the Hall of the Guild, now an important part of the Grammar School. We can well imagine what a theatrical tendency they gave the school boys, not only William Shakespeare, but James Burbage, and others, who, like them, afterwards became popular London players, and were probably only too glad to introduce the clever youth who was to furnish them with so many fine parts.

www.libtool.com.cn

And, now, let us suppose that there sprang up in the youthful Shakespeare a discontented spirit. He found himself patronised, tolerated, or snubbed by those who were glad of his companionship for the amusement it afforded, but who would not dream of treating him as their equal; while he felt that in mental strength, learning, and accomplishments he was more than their superior. Why should he be debarred from the chase except when bidden as a humble follower? and so, having many companions only too eager to lead him astray, he fell into the famous poaching scrape, and was brought before the Justice at Charlecote. We dare not think any record of these proceedings perished in the recent destruction of the countless accumulation of unheeded papers kept in the old malt-house, but it seems clear that it was not for his killing a deer, but for the ridicule cast upon his prosecutor and judge, that William thought it advisable to absent himself awhile from Stratford and join his cousin and friends in London, who were ready to welcome him and eager to turn his talents to account. That a serious feud arose between Sir Thomas and Shakespeare seems certain. It may have been that the lad's connection with the Catholic family of Arden was the real cause of this flight, but, whatever the cause, we soon find him touching up the copies of the dramas belonging to his company, and transposing or writing-in lines of his own to take the place of others that had been lost in oral transmission. But he took no dogs to London, no

Macbeth 3-1.

"Hounds or greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs, shoughs, water rugs, or demi-wolves yclept all by the name of dogs."

For none of these could be permitted on the stage of the theatre or in the humble lodgings of the obscure actor from Warwickshire.

www.libtool.com.cn

Having now followed Shakespeare to London we need no longer, for our purpose, trace his life as he grew into fame, mingling with the courtiers and wits, and working hard at his profession, writing and bringing out fresh master-pieces every few months. No time then to encourage or indulge in a fancy or taste which was not imparted in his infancy or had not grown up with his youth.

On his frequent journeyings to and from Stratford his own imaginings were sufficient companions; and, when he stayed in his native town, the time he had to spare from writing was well filled up with business of his own—with consultations with Mr. Green and others, and with giving advice on the various cases on which he was consulted by his friends. That he was so consulted, was much respected, and highly regarded by his friends and neighbours we have plenty of evidence to show. Halliwell-Phillipps's "Outlines of the Life" will give numerous illustrations. Besides the fact of his burial in the chancel of the Parish Church, the monument put up soon after his death, and the many contemporary notices and eulogiums all prove this beyond any reasonable doubt.

In so far tracing an imaginary sketch of these earlier influences upon the tastes of the young poet, I have, of course, mingled what is likely with what is known to be true, a pleasanter task, certainly, than some have undertaken, who have mixed up the unlikely with what is known to be absolutely false.

I have not discarded all facts which cannot be legally proved to the satisfaction of the most critical mind. I have

not thought fit to discard tradition, for, in default of positive proof to the contrary, I am inclined to give considerable weight to anecdotes and incidents that have been handed down and recorded within some eighty or hundred years or more by Ward, Aubrey, Davis, and others. And as this does not pretend to be more than a fanciful sketch, it is unnecessary to quote authorities. For statements made in this respect it is, unfortunately, on a level with works of much greater pretensions, and even the most full and important biographies sometimes do not quote the authorities on which their statements are based, their writers seeming to think their own assertions sufficient to satisfy any reasonable inquirer that a correct decision has been attained. My hearers, however, are at perfect liberty to treat the whole as mere fancy, except the lines quoted from Shakespeare himself, which, I believe, are quite sufficient to prove that he had no fancy for dogs.

I have taken out as I went along those lines which I considered the most important to prove my case, but I may as well add a few out of many further illustrations.

Launce and his dog Crab will occur to all as one of the more important instances of the introduction of a dog into the plays. But this, I fear, only affords another strong proof of the complete want of sympathy felt by Shakespeare with the subject. A decided contempt for both the dog and his master is the ruling idea, even omitting the coarse jokes with which the conversation is interspersed. There is not much sentiment in the following :—

"I think Crab my dog be the sourest-natured dog that lives; my mother weeping, my father wailing, my sister crying, our maid howling, our cat wringing her hands, and all our house in a great perplexity, yet did not this cruel-hearted cur shed one tear: he is a stone, a very pebble stone, and has no more pity in him than a dog: a Jew would have wept to have seen our parting; why, my grandam, having no eyes, look you, wept herself blind at my parting. Nay I'll show you the manner of it. This shoe is my father: no, this left shoe is my father: no, no, this left shoe is my mother: nay, that

Two Gentlemen of Verona (Memorial Edition) 2-3.

cannot be so, neither: yes, it is so, it is so, it hath the worser sole. This shoe, with the hole in it, is my mother, and this my father; a vengeance on't! there 'tis: now, sir, this staff is my sister, for, look you, she is as white as a lily and as small as a wand: this hat is Nan, our maid: I am the dog: no, the dog is himself and I am the dog—Oh! the dog is me, and I am myself; ay, so, so. Now come I to my father; Father, your blessing: now should not the shoe speak a word for weeping: now should I kiss my father; well, he weeps on. Now come I to my mother: O, that she could speak now like a wood woman! Well, I kiss her; why, there 'tis; here's my mother's breath up and down. Now come I to my sister; mark the moan she makes. Now the dog all this while sheds not a tear nor speaks a word; but see how I lay the dust with my tears."

www.1blood.com.cn

And, again, in another act—

Enter LAUNCE, with his dog.

Two Gentlemen of Verona (Memorial Edition) 4-3.

"*Launce.* When a man's servant shall play the cur with him, look you, it goes hard; one that I brought up of a puppy; one that I saved from drowning, when three or four of his blind brothers and sisters went to it. I have taught him, even as one would say precisely, 'thus I would teach a dog.' I was sent to deliver him as a present to Mistress Sylvia from my master; and I came no sooner into the dining-chamber but he steps me to her trencher and steals her capon's leg: O, 'tis a foul thing when a cur cannot keep himself in all companies! I would have, as one should say, one that takes upon him to be a dog indeed, to be, as it were, a dog at all things. If I had not had more wit than he, to take a fault upon me that he did, I think verily he had been hanged for't; sure as I live, he had suffered for't: you shall judge. He thrusts me himself into the company of three or four gentlemanlike dogs, under the duke's table: he had not been there—bless the mark!—a while, but all the chamber smelt him. 'Out with the dog!' says one: 'What cur is that?' says another: 'Whip him out' says the third: 'Hang him up' says the duke. I, having been acquainted with the smell before, knew it was Crab, and goes me to the fellow that whips the dogs: 'Friend,' quoth I, 'you mean to whip the dog?' 'Ay, marry, do I,' quoth he. 'You do him the more wrong,' quoth I, ''twas I did the thing you wot of.' He makes no more ado, but whips me out of the chamber. How many masters would do this for his servant? Nay, I'll be sworn, I have sat in the stocks for puddings he hath stolen, otherwise he had been executed; I have stood on the pillory for geese he hath killed, otherwise he had suffered for't. Thou thinkest not of it now. Nay, I remember the trick you served me when I took my leave of Madam Sylvia: did not I bid thee still mark me and do as I do? didst thou ever see me do such a trick?"

Nothing sympathetic here for either man or cur. In fact, Shakespeare looked upon all dogs as curs unless they were distinctly marked and set aside for some specific use. Edgar

in King Lear (while pretending to be mad) strings out a list of names which must have included the majority of distinct kinds or breeds known in Shakespeare's time:—

> "Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim, hound or spaniel brach or lym, or hob-tail tike, or trundle-tail, Tom will make them weep and wail."

Lear 3-6.

www.libtool.com.cn

This list, with that given before from "Macbeth," and a few others mentioned throughout the plays, show that Shakespeare understood various breeds and qualities, even including the Iceland or Esquimaux dog, which he rightly describes as the "prick-eared dog of Iceland." But with all his knowledge he does not love them—he rather dislikes and despises them. He has no word—with the exceptions already mentioned—to say of their fidelity and affection, but on the contrary, as in "Richard III.," he makes Queen Margaret say—

> "Oh Buckingham take heed of yonder dog.
> Look, when he fawns he bites; and when he bites
> His venom tooth will rankle to the death."

Richard III. 1-3.

The cursing Queen Margaret finds the dog a convenient copy from which to paint a likeness of the crooked-backed Richard. She describes him as

> "Hell-hound! that doth hunt us all to death.
> That dog that had his teeth before his eyes,
> To worry lambs and lap their gentle blood."

Richard III. 1-4.

And in the same scene she prays

> "That I may live to say the dog is dead."

And in the next Act the same comparison rises to Richmond's lips when he exclaims

> "The day is ours, the bloody dog is dead."

Richard III. 5-4.

Over and over again the dog is drawn upon for illustrations of dislike and hatred, but never for trustiness and courage. Prince Arthur says

> "And like a dog that is compelled to fight
> Snatch at his master that doth tarre him on."

King John 4-1.

Richard II. 3-2.

Or when Richard II. denounces his former favourites as

"Dogs, easily won to fawn on any man."

But it is needless to multiply instances. I have quoted enough to show that the name of dog, or cur, or hound, is ever ready as a term of contempt or dislike in the works of Shakespeare; while the sentiment that animates Campbell's poem of "Bethgelert," or the affection which inspired the lines addressed by Byron to his dead Newfoundland friend, find no equivalent in anything uttered by our great dramatist, or put into the mouths of any of his characters. No; it is a certain fact that Shakespeare was no dog fancier. He knew as much of dogs as he cared to know; used them frequently for his illustrations, and described the characteristics of various species; but he does not love any of them—on the contrary, he rather disliked and despised them. At the best they were as

Richard II. 5-5.

"That sad dog that brings me food to make misfortune live."

At the worst they were only fit for the "Witches' cauldron."

Shakespeare disliked the dog, and considered the word only fit to be used as a term of reproach, but this dislike was not peculiar to him, and, probably, extended to most serious and well-brought-up men of his time.

Most likely the book from which Shakespeare's chief instruction was gained was the Bible. At any rate its powerful influence upon his mind is very evident. The Eastern feeling that the dog is an unclean beast runs through it, and its lessons in that, as in higher subjects, seem to have impressed themselves upon the mind of the youth, and, perhaps unconsciously, led him to use the same ideas and language in connection with this animal that he had imbibed from his early Bible lessons.

It may be said that Shakespeare talked as familiarly

"Of roaring lions as maids of thirteen do of puppy-dogs," King John 2-2.

and treats of puppy-dogs as familiarly as of roaring lions, but he had no more affection for the puppies than for the lions, and though he might stroke the

www.libtool.com.cn

"Puppy greyhound ever so gently" Henry IV. 2-4.

when grown up he yet considered him as a cruel hound, whose rank in nature was no higher than the hogs. Thus says Puck—

"Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound.
A hog." Midsummer Night's Dream 3-1.

and so the Duke in "Twelfth Night" speaks of his desires as resembling—

"Fell and cruel hounds." Twelfth Night 1-1,

I pray my hearers, therefore, to let me claim that I have proved my proposition—that, whatever we may think either of the man or his works, it may be admitted at any rate that I am correct in my first assertion that whatever our greatest dramatic poet may have been we all agree that Shakespeare was no dog fancier.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

Cornell University Library
PR 3044.F64

Shakespeare on horseback; and, Shakespear

3 1924 013 163 708

olin

www.libtool.com.cn